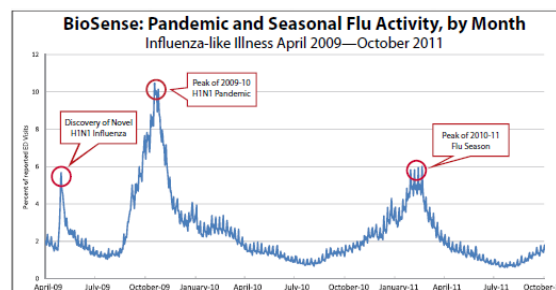# BioSense 2.0: A 21st Century Surveillance System

What is BioSense? Biosense is a public health surveillance system. It tracks health problems in the United States as they evolve. It provides public health officials with data, information, and tools needed to better prepare for and coordinate responses to safeguard and improve the health of Americans.*

How does BioSense work? BioSense pulls together information (de-identified data) on emergency department (ED) visits and hospitalizations from multiple sources, including federal and civilian hospitals, from around the country. The BioSense program works with state or local health departments that have agreed to share data from their own emergency department monitoring systems. Analysis of these data provides insight into the health of communities and the country.

How has BioSense contributed to public health surveillance? From the beginning of the H1N1 pandemic in April 2009, BioSense data from EDs, laboratories and pharmacists were used to make decisions about immunization recommendations, school and building closures, and other response measures. After the 2011 Japanese Tsunami and nuclear disaster following the earthquake, Biosense monitored healthcare activity in 20 U.S. facilities in Japan. The data demonstrated that American troops and family members showed no increase in radiation sickness or injuries during and after this event.

Biosense 2.0 is the only public health tool that provides a picture of what is happening right now with any health condition, anywhere, and everywhere in the country.
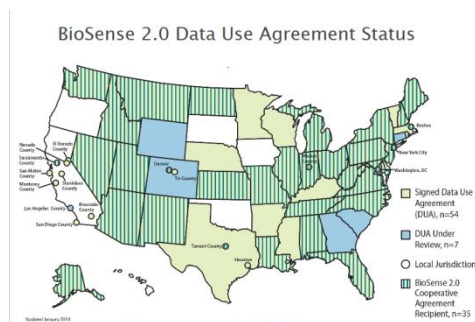
How was BioSense developed? BioSense 2.0 (latest version) was developed and is governed by an active collaboration of CDC, state and local health departments, and other public health partners. Biosense 2.0 is the first U.S. Department of Health and Human Services system to move completely to a distributed cloud computing environment. This distributed environment, governed jointly by state, local and federal representatives, provides local and state stakeholders secure data storage space and analytics at no cost to them.

How can BioSense 2.0 help hospital providers meet Meaningful Use requirements? BioSense 2.0 can serve as a "catcher's mitt" for new health data under the Meaningful Use program, without requiring your agency to purchase and maintain additional servers or other infrastructure required to manage increased data volume. Also, eligible providers (ED or outpatient) can be incentivized and vendors can

be certified when sending to this state-controlled environment. Successful ongoing submission of electronic syndromic surveillance data from certified electronic health records to a public health agency meets Stage 2 of Meaningful Use measures.

How many states are using BioSense?

Thirty nine states, including the Alaska Division of Public Health (ADPH) have signed Data Use Agreements with ASTHO (Association of State and Territorial Health Officials) to join the BioSense community. (green colored states have signed DUAs). Map available at https://sites.google.com/site/biosenseredesign/

Who can I contact in Alaska? BioSense 2.0 is committed to working directly with local and state health departments to expand syndromic surveillance practice. In Alaska, syndromic surveillance data (de-identified data, primarily medical diagnosis codes from EDs) can stream through the Alaska Health Information Exchange (HIE) to BioSense 2.0. Syndromic surveillance data submitted will not contain individual personal information about patients. For more information about the Alaska HIE, please contact the Alaska eHealth network (AeHN): info@ak-ehealth.org; website: http://ak-ehealth.org/

How will BioSense be used in Alaska? Data will be analyzed by staff in the ADPH, Section of Epidemiology to provide situational awareness to Alaskans and the nation about current health situations. ADPH will receive data through the HIE from facilities and plans to develop a webpage to display alerts.

Alaska Section of Epidemiology contacts
Peggy Cobey, ANP, MPH
3601 C St. Suite 540, Anchorage, AK 99503
Phone: 907-269-8000
Website: http://www.epi.alaska.gov
Email: peggy.cobey@alaska.gov

Other resources:
BioSense Program http://www.cdc.gov/biosense/index.html
BioSense 2.0 Fact sheet https://biosen.se/doc/BioSense%202.0%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf
Alaska eHealth Network http://ak-ehealth.org/
*Content adapted from CDC BioSense website: http://www.cdc.gov/biosense/index.html

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